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ROBERT E. SPEER

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An Address to
College Students

By

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WHAT CONSTITUTES A MISSIONARY CALL

By Robert E. Speer

What constitutes a missionary call? I think almost all of us are familiar with the issue that is involved in this question; some of us because we have faced it in our own lives and have tried to work our way through to an answer; and some of us because we have met it in the lives of other men, some of whom were honestly endeavoring to find an answer to it, and others of whom were making it a cover for dismissing the thought of their possible missionary duty.

In two regards it is a good sign that men ask this question with reference to the work of foreign missions and their duty to it. It suggests that men think of the missionary enterprise as a solemn enterprise, an enterprise that is related in a singular way to God, and over which God exercises a singular care; and in the second place it indicates that they believe, if they are sincere, that their lives are owned by a Person who has a right to direct them and whose call they must await. When that has been said, however, I think everything has been said that can be allowed in favor of the question, and one must go on at once to say that it is a question which can easily become thoroughly heathen and un-Christian.

Departmentalizing Life

By what right do we sever our life into departments, either geographically or otherwise, and say with reference to certain departments of life, "Now I will not enter upon that sphere of life until I have a call different in degree or kind from the call with which I would be satisfied to enter upon any other?" What right has any man to be willing to study law under any less positive assurance that it is the will of God that he should do it than a man must have who goes out into the mission field? You and I have no right to set off certain departments of life from other departments and to say of those, "Those departments are different from others; we will not think of entering upon those without special divine sanction, without an unusual sort of divine leading different from the kind with which we would be content to enter upon any other branch of service." What is there in the Rio Grande river to compel a man to have one kind of assurance that it is the will of God that he should preach on the south side of it, and another kind that he should preach on the north side of it? Is this world so different in different parts of it that I should be willing to work in Texas on grounds that I should not regard as sufficient to allow me to work in Mexico? What is there in the oceans that warrants a man in demanding evidence that it is the will of God that he should work on one side of them that he does not demand

as justifying his working on the other? The conception of distinction in the sacredness of spheres of life is pagan. Christianity contends that the whole life and all service are to be consecrated and that no man dare do anything but the will of God and can know nothing less or more regarding any course of action or any life decision than that it is God's will that he should follow it. And there can be no more than this either required or possible in the case of foreign missions.

Suppose I were a workman on a plantation, and cotton were ready to be picked, and the order had gone out from my employer that the cotton must be picked as soon as possible all over his plantation: because he had not come to speak to me personally, might I plead, "In the absence of any specific order from my master to pick cotton I will go a-fishing, or I will do some business of my own?" Is it not a fair analogy? You and I are in a world where the Master's work needs to be done. He has told us to go out into this world and do His work. He Himself called it a harvest field. Because He has not come and spoken individually to us and said, "Go and reap there," are we therefore free to go about our own business, or not to reap at all?

Erroneous Conception of a Call

And if men are going to draw lines of division between different departments of service, what reasoning

leads them to think that it requires less divine sanction for a man to spend his life in nominally Christian lands in commercial service than it requires for him to go out in missionary service to lands which are not Christian at all? If men are to have special calls for anything, they ought to have special calls to go about their own business, to choose the easy places, to make money, and to gratify their own purposes and ambitions. How can any honest Christian man demand a special call as the warrant for not doing that sort of thing, and say that unless he gets a specific call of God to preach the gospel here or abroad he has a right to spend his life as he may please? Is it not absurd to allege that a special call is necessary to foreign missions, while a man may go into business or law, or medicine, or follow his own will in problems with no divine call or special warrant at all? If a special call is ever requisite it would seem to be far more requisite for these things than for the missionary service of mankind.

There is a dilemma involved in this erroneous conception of the missionary call. We believe surely that God has an interest in the evangelization of the world. If He has an interest in the evangelization of the world and a purpose for its accomplishment He must have "called" enough men, on the theory that He does call men in that special way, to evangelize it. Well, it has not been evangelized. So either God has not called them,

or else He has called them and they have not heard. You who believe that this kind of a special call is necessary must believe in consequence that there are a great many men and women who have been called in this supernatural way into the mission work and have not gone, or else that God does not purpose the present evangelization of the world, or else you will have to abandon this notion of special missionary calls.

Variety in Calls

After all, what do men mean when they speak of the necessity of a special missionary call? Do they mean that a missionary must have some kind of manifestly supernatural indication of the divine will? "A call," men say, "for example, like that which came to the apostle Paul; I would be satisfied with that. Or the kind of a call I have heard Bishop Thoburn speak of; I would be satisfied with that." I believe that St. Paul and Bishop Thoburn had these experiences, but I do not believe that it is necessary that everyone should have them. David Livingston had no such call. He says himself that he went simply out of a sense of duty. William Goodell had no such call. He consecrated himself behind an old tree stump at Andover over his Bible and the last command of Jesus Christ. Henry Martyn, William Carey, Keith-Falconer, nine-tenths of the great missionaries of the world never had any such calls. Now

if a call like this is necessary before a man may be sure that it is his duty to go out to the mission field, did these men do wrong in going? Shall we say that the noblest men who ever served God in the world flew in the face of Providence because they did not have the particular sort of call you are asking for?

Or a man says he wants a dream. The other night I dreamed that I went trout fishing, and I met a lady, and she asked me for my rod, and I loaned it to her, and she cast the fly through a window in a grain elevator and caught a little black puppy. Now do you mean to tell me that that was a divine indication of what my course of action was to be on the following day? And yet there are some who smile at such absurdities who have hid behind the evasion that they lack a nocturnal missionary call, who avow that if only some divine leading might come to them in the kind that came in his dream to Paul, they would go. Dreams do not exempt men from the use of reason. God does not call men in absurd and frivolous ways. If God is going to have dealings with you, He will have them in the broad daylight. That was the time of all but one of Paul's missionary visions. It is not necessary for Him to go about in the night when our wits are asleep and through our sub-conscious selves to show us what may be His will for our lives. He will deal with us as men of reason, and He expects us to judge the facts of an education and experience and knowledge

and capacity, and to determine rationally what may be the purpose of God for us as revealed in these facts of the world and of our own lives.

The Place of Emotion

Or a man says that he does not *feel* specially called. Well, feelings are often a mere matter of health; more often they are a matter of other things. They are not lawless and unordered. You and I do not regulate our lives by mere feelings in other regards. Feelings spring from the stock of information in our intellects, from the attitude of our wills, from the bearing of our hearts toward God and toward the world. If we do not "*feel* called" the most natural explanation is not that we are not called, but that our feelings may spring from uninformed minds, from careless hearts, from unsurrendered wills. This is the explanation of the absence of calls which Dean Vaughan suggested: "Know, and you will feel; know, and you will pray; know, and you will help. You will be ashamed of the sluggishness, of the isolation, of the selfishness which has made you think only of your own people and your father's house."

Need for Discrimination

A great deal of the confusion that surrounds this subject springs from the failure to discriminate between two clearly different things: one, the will of God for

me; and the other, the method of the manifestation of that will to me. It is a matter of no consequence to me how God reveals His will to me; what I want to know is what that will is. It may come in some mysterious way; it may come from the voice of a friend; it may come through the influence of some address or book. I care not; the supreme thing is that God has a will for every man of us, and that no man has any right to specify one way, and least of all some magical and abnormal way in which that will must be revealed to him, nor has he any right to discriminate against any one field of life-work by conditioning God and requiring of Him some peculiar mode of procedure in summoning him to that work.

The Christian Presumption

The whole matter reduces itself to this simple proposition. There is a general obligation resting upon Christian men to see that the gospel of Jesus Christ is preached to the world. You and I need no special call to apply that general call to our lives. We do need a special call to exempt us from its application to our lives. In other words, the presumption under which we are living may be held to be the presumption that the will of God desires without failure or delay that the gospel of His son Jesus Christ, the only Saviour, should be made known to the whole world. We need no special

divine revelation to our own personal lives to indicate that we fall under that general duty. What we need is a special call to assure us who are young and free and qualified to go that we are exempt from personal obedience to that presumptive and general obligation.

But there are some who say, "I deny that there is any such presumption. The presumption is in favor of a man's staying just where he was born." Well, then, if there is such a presumption as that, it is overcome by the greater need of the world. When a man stands face to face with such a need as that which exists here, and then contrasts it with the need that exists over there, I believe he must see that that need overcomes any presumption, if such did exist, in behalf of a man's staying here. But I deny that there is any such presumption. You cannot defend the presumption that every man ought to stay in the condition in which he is born. If I am born in a deadly, unhealthful region, is there a presumption that I should stay there? If I am born or grow up a kleptomaniac, or a miser in the matter of spiritual goods or any other, is there presumption in favor of my continuing so? It is not warrantable to allege that the mere fact of having been born in such and such a condition puts one under a presumption of duty to remain here. The fact that I was born in a relatively Christian land creates the contrary presumption, the presumption, namely, that I am to carry Christ

who is known here to the lands where He is not known so well or at all.

There are men who say, "No, you are unfair in that. We hold that there is no presumption either way, that every man ought to stand with a perfectly open and impartial mind before the question of the duty of his life to the world, not casting the weight on either side of the scale." That would be all right if we were living in little boats out in the middle of the Pacific ocean, but it is impossible so long as we are here. No presumption! On the contrary, every day the atmosphere in which we live coerces and shapes us in spite of ourselves and creates a powerful actual presumption. All those tentacles that every day are clinging closer and closer to us are setting at prejudice the interests of the other half of the world. We do not live where it is possible for any of us to say, "I will just move along steadily, no presumption on either side, until some special indication of duty comes to me." I believe that Keith-Falconer was expressing the truth when he closed his last address to the students of Edinburgh and Glasgow with the sentence: "While vast continents are shrouded in almost utter darkness, and hundreds of millions suffer the horrors of heathenism and of Islam, the burden of proof rests on you to show that the circumstances in which God has placed you were meant by God to keep you out of the foreign field." In other words, each of us

stands under a presumptive obligation to give his life to the world unless we have some real special exemption that excuses us from the weight of this general and presumptive obligation.

I am willing to go further than this. If I were standing by the bank of a stream, and some little children were drowning in the stream, I would not need any officer of the law to come along and serve on me some legal paper, in which my name was definitely entered, commanding me under such and such penalties to rescue those drowning children. I should despise myself if I should stand there, with the possibility of saving those little lives, waiting until by some authoritative proceeding I was personally designated to rescue them. Or, I have some neighbors who are starving, and I have bread in abundance, and I stand and watch them day by day, with pinched faces, starving and ravenous, while I have bread in abundance and to spare. I do not need anybody to come with a court order specifying me as the individual bound to feed those hungry souls. You would not, either. Why do we apply, in a matter of infinitely more consequence, principles that we would despise if anybody should suggest that we should apply them in the practical affairs of our daily life? Listen for a moment to the call of the hungry world, feel for one hour its sufferings, sympathize for one moment with its woes, and then regard it just as you would regard human want in

your neighborhood, or the want that you meet as you pass down the street, or anywhere in life. Every one of us rests under a sort of general obligation to give life and time and possession to the evangelization of the lives everywhere who have never heard of Jesus Christ, and we are bound to go, unless we can offer some true ground of exemption which we could with a clear conscience present to Christ, and be sure of His approval of it.

Exemptions: Language

Now what grounds of exemption are just? A man says, "Well, the inability to learn a language constitutes a ground of exemption." Yes, if it is real; but is there any man who will allege that is his disability? Most of us talk one language already. One can learn anything if one wills. There is a multitude of ignorant people ever coming over here from Europe, and before very long many of them, with dull and undisciplined minds, will be speaking our language fluently. The brain is not the only faculty used in the acquisition of a new language. A man who mingles among the people takes the language in through his pores. And after all, the great faculty is the will. If a man wills to learn and goes out among the people, he will learn. It is a different thing learning a language among the people who talk it from trying to pick it up here. As Mr. Wilder used to put it, learning a language here is like pouring water in the

little interstices of a sponge for a day or two until you get it full, while learning a language there is sousing your sponge in the water and letting it penetrate every pore. Every one of us, one repeats, who has learned one language is able to learn another if we want to, and will put our lives into it.

Health

Some one says, "Is not want of health a sufficient excuse?" Yes, but we are not always trustworthy judges. A man may judge himself with too great lenience or too great severity. I remember a story that Mr. Forman used to tell of an interview he had with a student in the state of Iowa, who alleged as a reason for not going as a missionary to India that he had had a sunstroke. He proposed accordingly to spend his life in Iowa. "Well, my friend," said Mr. Forman, "where did you have that sunstroke?" "I had it here in this state." "Now, look here," said Mr. Forman, "I have lived most of my life in India, and I have never had a sun-stroke, and you propose to spend your life where you have already had one sun-stroke and where for all you know you may have another."

Now Mission Boards are not looking for men liable to sun-stroke. They purpose to act with good sense, and because they do act so, they know that often a man who is not perfect physically will be as well in Chile

or Korea or China or India as he will be here at home, and that it is worth while running a little risk for the sake of the good work that he will be likely to do. They have sensible medical advisers, who will decide for any man or woman the question whether they are exempted for reasons of health.

Spiritual Qualifications

Or a man says, "Is not the want of spiritual qualifications an adequate exemption?" Never. No self-created or self-removable disqualification can keep a man out of the mission field. Every one of us may have all the spiritual qualifications necessary for missionary work, and if we do not have them, it is a difficulty which springs from our own moral fault, and not from any of those circumstances beyond our control in which alone an adequate exemption can lie. A man not spiritually fitted ought not to go, but neither is he fit to stay. His immediate duty is to clean up and empower his life.

America's Needs

Or a man says, "Is not the great need here at home an adequate excuse?" Where? What great need do you mean here in the United States? Do you mean the great need in the western states? I could name half a dozen on the moment whose combined population is less than the population of the city of New York, and they are

the great home mission field in the west, and they have a Protestant evangelistic agency at work in them immensely greater than that employed in the whole city of New York. Besides, are you going there? As for the cities, there are in New York below Fourteenth Street for about half a million people more than one hundred Protestant chapels and churches. And are you going there? Is a man honest who alleges as a reason for not going to the foreign mission field the existence of a need at home to which he has not the slightest intention of devoting his life? There is great and real need at home, and workers are needed for it, but the need here in the United States constitutes no adequate exemption from the missionary call. I believe there are men who are exempt from the general call because of the manifestly definite and special divine work that is laid upon their shoulders here, but no man may allege a mere general need existing here at home, least of all a general need which he intends subsequently to ignore, and under the cover of that, slip out from the grip of the missionary obligation. No man has a right to settle in a country town in Ohio and practice law, on the ground that there is so much greater need for Christian work in the slums of New York than in central Africa. No man has a right to go into business in Montreal under the pretext that the vast West is so much more needy than China. If I refuse to preach the gospel in India because it

needs to be preached in Arizona, or Assiniboia, what relevancy does that argument have to my preaching the gospel nowhere, but subsequently settling down to an easy and selfish life in Savannah or Halifax? Or what consistency is there in refusing to go to Siam because the need of Christian work in the rural districts in America is so great, and then settling down to preach the gospel in some city or large town? The fundamental necessity of life and character is veracity, and such a course is the antithesis of veracity.

Home Professional Training

Or a man says: "I have already started to prepare for some work here at home. I am on my medical course, or my law course, or my course in pedagogy. Do you mean I am to throw up all I have gained and go out to the mission field?" I do not say so. I do say that the fact that you have got so far does not constitute a presumption that you are exempt. All that special training may have been given you for some specific purpose; no knowledge is lost on the mission field. Besides, I ask you to stop and think a moment. You have already got your professions chosen and are headed toward them, and many of you have only considered the necessity of a call as a sort of afterthought when brought to face foreign missions; you never thought of it when you were making your choice of your profession,

but only now when the missionary claim is pressing uneasily upon your conscience. But are you sure that God wants you to be a doctor or a teacher? Ought you not to have as much assurance that it is God's will that you should be, as you think is needed in the case of a foreign missionary? As a Christian man, your life belongs to Christ and your business is to do the will of God. Are you assured that it is the will of God that you should go on with your preparation for some secular work at home? If not, have you a right to go on with it? If you think you have, will you not admit the legitimacy of the same element of possible uncertainty in the missionary call?

What profession is it that you believe warrants you in giving your life to it instead of to the missionary enterprise? Is it law? I have no word to say against the practice of law. But I remind you, as Mr. Depew is reported to have stated to the graduating class in the Yale Law School some years ago, that there were then more than 60,000 lawyers in this land; and, as Justice Brewer is said to have declared at a meeting of the American Bar Association, in St. Louis, that not much more than one-half of that number could find legitimate business to do. The rest had to do other things or manufacture illegitimate business on which to live. And the number of lawyers has doubled since then.

Is it medicine that you are going to take up? There

are more than 150,000 doctors in this country already, one to every six hundred of the population. You well know that there is not enough sickness and disease among that many people to maintain a doctor, and that is one reason why there are so many quacks and corrupt and unworthy men in the profession. The *New York Sun* some years ago reported Dr. Billings as complaining, at the meeting of the American Medical Association in session in New Orleans, of the excess of medical colleges. The country needed about 2500 medical graduates annually, he said, and it graduated 10,000 to 12,500.

Do you intend to teach? There are more than 600,000 teachers in America, and you very well know that every time an attractive opportunity presents itself there are scores of applicants.

I present you an opening in which we cannot find enough men, doctors, teachers, ministers, workers of all sorts, all over the mission field; a thousand million sinning and suffering men and women, with only a little handful of folk of all nationalities giving the gospel to them. I do not understand the attitude of the man who can deliberately face that comparison and then set up the claim that he feels he is chosen to practice medicine or law or teaching here in this country unless he has a special call designating him as one of the men to go out to the immensely greater need, and such a call as he

has not regarded as necessary to his practice of medicine or law or teaching.

Love of Home

Or a man says, yet once more, "Is not the love of home an exemption?" Let Christ reply. "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me." Or a man says, "Is not the love of life, the desire to spend it richly here an exemption?" Let Christ answer again. "He that hateth not his father and his mother, and his brother and his sister, yea, and his own life, he cannot be my disciple." Life an exemption! Life was given us on such terms as to constitute a presumption for its expenditure, not to be nursed carefully in velvet, not to be spent in ease, but to be poured out in the richness of great sacrifice.

Very often I have gone out to the little graveyard in Salisbury, North Carolina, to a grave in the center of the yard that I found many years ago when I was wandering through the cemetery between trains. I remember still the first summer day when I came upon that grave. Something on the stone caught my eye from a distance. I came up and read upon it the inscription which stated that there lay the body of F. M. Kent, Lieutenant Colonel of the First Louisiana Regulars, who died in 1864, in the month of April, and underneath were these words: "He gave his life for the cause that

he loved." Near by was the grave of John R. Pearson, First Lieutenant of the Seventh Regiment of North Carolina, who was shot at Petersburg, at the age of eighteen, and beneath the name and simple record were the words, "I look for the resurrection of the dead." And I took off my hat and stood beside the graves of the eighteen-year-old lieutenant and the older colonel who had given their lives for the cause that they loved. Did they wait, do you suppose, until Jefferson Davis had served a personal summons upon them? Was that the way men did in those days? Did they refuse to volunteer until they had, each man of them, a personal call with his own name filled in, signed by the hand of Abraham Lincoln or Jefferson Davis? Men despise the spirit that would have prompted such an attitude. Shall we do less than despise it?

False Premises

This whole business of asking for special calls in the missionary work does violence to the Bible. No man thinks of interpreting his Bible so in other matters. There is the command, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." You say, "That means other men." There is the promise, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." You say, "That means me." You must have a special divine indication that you fall under the com-

mand; you do not ask any special divine indication that you fall under the promise. By what right do we draw this line of distinction between the obligations of Christianity and its privileges, and accept the privileges as applying to every Christian and relegate its obligations to the conscience of the few?

It does violence to the working of the spirit of God. He does not work over men's faculties; He works through them. In every other department of life He does it; He will do it in this department, or He will not work at all.

It does violence to the ordinary canons of common sense and honest judgment. We do not think of ordering other departments of our life on this basis. By what right do we single out this department and apply to it these exceptional canons? I think ex-President Patton, of Princeton, was representing the situation truthfully when he used the illustration: that if he were employed by the owner of a great vineyard to gather grapes in the vineyard, and the general instructions were that as many grapes as possible should be gathered, and he came down to the gate of the vineyard and found there around the walls the vines well plucked and the ground covered over with pickers, and away off in the distance no pickers at all and the vines loaded to the ground, he would not need any special visit and order from the owner of the vineyard to instruct him as to what his duty was. Do we?

There is something wonderfully misleading and delusive in this business of missionary calls. With many of us it is not a missionary call at all that we are looking for; it is a shove, that is all. There are a great many of us who would never hear a call if it came; somebody must come and coerce us before we will go into the missionary work. There are men who say they would go if they were called, but they would not go. Back in Jesus' day men thought they would do things if they only had certain evidence, but when the evidence came they did not do them. We think we would believe on Christ if we saw Him. Most of the men who saw Him did not believe on Him. It is the old rebuke of Abraham over again. "Father Abraham," said the outcast, "will you not send some special messenger to warn my brothers?" Said Abraham, "They have Moses and the prophets; if they will not hear them, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." There are many men who say they would believe in Chrstianity if they had a miracle. They would not believe in Christianity if they had a miracle. The men who will not believe in Christianity without a miracle will not believe in Christianity with one. The men who will not go out to the mission field, as a rule, without this specified method of being called would not recognize it if it came. It is a matter of the whole bias

and bent of a man's character, whether he is one of these reluctant, passive men, who stand still until they are pushed, or one of the aggressive, eager men who move until they are stopped.

Paul's Call to Macedonia

One likes to go back and read over and over the life of the Apostle Paul as illustrative of the right type of man. He never sat down and waited for a dream to come and guide him; he never waited for external, coercive direction to shape his course. He was working through what we now call Asia Minor, and his path was determined by indications of the Spirit, not as to what he should do, but as to what he should not do. The Spirit forbade work in Asia. He tried Bithynia, and was again blocked. So he came down to Troas through walls of negative guidance (Acts xvi:6-8). Paul did not say: "I will wait till I feel a call." He pressed ahead until he was instructed. There is a great deal too much lethargic waiting for divine guidance, when what God is wanting is to see some sign of life and movement to guide. You can steer a moving, but not a motionless ship. Doubtless a man may bustle about so in his own fussy plans as to be in no fit condition to hear divine counsel or to seek it; but there is no warrant in Paul's method for the course of those who refuse to move toward the foreign field unless compelled from without.

At the end of his hedging in and hedging off, Paul got some positive leading; but even then his conclusion of duty was an inference. He interpreted his dream in the spirit of his life. He was a going man and he was looking for beckonings. It was the man, not the dream, that led to his crossing into Europe. Some modern evader would have called it a mere dream, and pronounced it wholly insufficient reason for any such serious forward step.

Ramsay thinks the Macedonian whom Paul saw was Luke. How otherwise could Paul know it was a Macedonian than by recognizing a Macedonian acquaintance? There was nothing peculiar in the dress of the Macedonians, and Luke was probably the only Macedonian he knew. "We can imagine," says Ramsay, "how Paul came to Troas, in doubt as to what should be done. As a harbor it formed the link between Asia and Macedonia. Here he met the Macedonian Luke; and with his view turned onwards he slept, and beheld in a vision his Macedonian acquaintance beckoning him onward to his own country."

Possibly Paul and Luke had been sitting up late that night talking about Macedonia, and Luke had urged arguments by which he would persuade Paul to go over, and when Paul went to sleep he was full of Luke's arguments, and at last had his dream and there was Luke again appealing to him to go across to Macedonia. It was not

the dream that took Paul over. The dream was the last confirmation, but Paul would have got to Macedonia without any such dream. The dream was not the call. The facts of the world and of Paul's own life were shaping his course according to the will of God. He was the sort of man who did not wait for external guidance, who sat down until somebody came, upset him and made him go; he was the type of man who fixed his eyes on a great goal and moved toward it. "Yes," he says, "I have been ambitious." What for? A special call? "Yea, so I have been ambitious to preach the gospel, not where Christ has been already named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation; but, as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see; and they that have not heard shall understand." (*Rom.* 15:20, 21.)

Essential Attitudes of Mind

Well, you ask, Do you mean that we should take our lives in our own hands in this matter? That is precisely what I am appealing against. That is exactly what we have done. We have taken our lives in our own hands and proposed to go our own way unless God compels us to go some other way. What I ask is that we should give our lives over into Christ's hands, to go Christ's way until God shall reveal to us some special individual path on either side of that great general way which Jesus Christ has marked out before His church and for which He is call-

ing everywhere for men.

But you say, "Do you mean that every one is to go, or to try to go?" No, indeed, I do not. I am not trying to specify any course of duty for any man, or any method of the revelation of duty to life. God has His own way of guiding every life. I believe He wants men as Christian lawyers, doctors, teachers, business men, ministers, artisans at home. And I believe that if we neglect our own house or nation we are worse than infidels. What I am trying to do is to cut out some of the quibbles and sophistries and self-deceptions by which men satisfy themselves in the evasion of missionary duty, and to correct honest misconceptions which confuse and mislead men. I plead that the misisonary duty be given its fair consideration in the investment and use of life.

I want to say three last things:

Conscripts Not Wanted

In the first place, God does not want any conscripts. If that is what we are waiting for—to be conscripted—I do not believe that the call will come. What He wants is volunteers, men who will give themselves in the spirit of Isaiah, "Here am I, Lord; send me."

Every Man a Volunteer

In the second place, for each true Christian the post of sacrifice and of difficulty is the post of presumptive

duty. I do not understand how a man can turn aside to make a fortune here, to gratify an ambition here, without a special call. I do understand how a man can feel that without such a call it is his duty to give himself to the post of greatest toil and earthly loss and danger. I remember one of the illustrations that Mr. Charles Studd used when he was here, of the appeal that was made for volunteers before the Ashanti expedition went some years ago to Africa. They called out at Windsor the Scots Guards, and the colonel commanding made a frank statement of just what the expedition was and what was involved; then he called for volunteers, and he turned away for a moment, and when he turned back the whole line was standing, apparently just as it had been before. He looked up and down the line for a moment in indignation, and then he said, "What! the Scots Guards, and no volunteers!" and one of the officers standing by said, "Colonel, the whole line stepped forward." They were not waiting for any specific personal injunction. Every man jumped at the chance of sacrifice, recognized in the call to hardship and danger the glorious call, and would only be turned back from it, as Gideon's companies turned back, when specially exempted by the elimination of God.

Love Never Faileth

And, last of all, I think love will hear calls where the

loveless heart will not know that they are sounding. Will you look in your own heart again and make sure whether or not the call has not been there all the time? Have you been near enough to Jesus Christ to hear Him speak? Has your heart been open enough to the world in sympathy and love to hear the call of its need? If there were a hundred little children crying, a mother would be able to pick out the voices of her own, especially if they were voices of pain and suffering. There is a mighty keenness in the ears of love, and I wonder whether, after all, that may not explain a great deal that one is perplexed over in this matter of special missionary calls, whether after all it is not often just a matter of callous heart, of reluctant will, of sealed mind.

God so loved the world that He gave. It was need in the world plus love in God that constituted the call to Christ. Do we need more than sufficed for Him? If they were our own, would we hesitate and hold back?

"What if your own were starving,
Fainting with famine pain,
And yet you knew where golden grew
Rich fruit and ripened grain,
Would you turn aside while they gasped and died,
And leave them to their pain?"

Let us lay aside now all double-dealing and subter-

fuge, all the evasions by which the devil is attempting to persuade us to escape from our duty, and let us get up like men and look at duty and do it. Students are old enough to decide to do their duty. They are old enough to decide to go to college, they are old enough to decide for law and medicine and other professions; they are old enough, too, to decide this question also. God forbid that we should try behind any kind of pretext to hide from the solemn personal consideration of our vital duty. "Go ye, into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Have you any reason for not going that you could give to Jesus Christ? That is the real question for every man of us.